

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Van Allen and Son Department Store

AND/OR COMMON

John D. Van Allen and Son Dry-Goods Store

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Northwest corner Fifth Avenue and South Second Street

CITY, TOWN

Clinton

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY

Clinton

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John Van Allen  
(319-242-0088)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

200 North 11th Street

CITY, TOWN

Clinton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Assessors Office of Clinton

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Clinton

STATE

Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

112

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Van Allen store rises four stories and is of steel frame construction enclosing large plate glass windows separated by horizontal bands between floors. The steel structure is encased in concrete and faced with brick. There are large wood joists with an accessible attic space between floors--there was to be an addition that would have made the department store a 10 story building.

"The nature of the skeletal construction of steel is clearly evident. The wall is made of the long, thin bricks which Sullivan often used, in a burnt gray color with a tinge of purple. At the base are vertical slabs of block marble framing the large show-windows, and above the ground story all the windows are framed by a light gray terra cotta. There is a very slight cornice."<sup>1</sup> The most extraordinary feature of the building is the foliate ornament that bursts out of the terminations of the slender mullions running through the three stories.

There has been only minor remodeling: street show windows have had aluminum sash installed with slightly elevated walls, aluminum fascia added to canopies; some first floor and balcony changes, complete rewiring and air conditioning added. A second elevator was added (completely concealed) in a shaft originally provided and an exposed sprinkler system installed.

On the interior, the original foliate column capitals remain on the ground level and where others were added on upper floors, the originals were duplicated. Although this building is not one of the "jewel box" banks, the Van Allen store is one of those simple, elegant structures built when the American world of commerce was commissioning Roman Baths and Temples.

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<sup>1</sup>Morrison, Hugh. Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture. W. W. Norton & Co., N. Y., 1935, p. 216.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1913-1915

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Louis Sullivan

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This department store is one of the dwindling number of Sullivan buildings that represent the work of the late years of his life when his architectural practice was reduced to the patronage of a few midwestern clients. There are five buildings by Sullivan in Iowa: two altered or changed so as to seriously damage their integrity--the People's Savings Bank in Cedar Rapids and the Henry Adams Building in Algona, the remaining three are the Columbus Bank, the Saint Pauls Church in Cedar Rapids and the Van Allen Department Store in Clinton. Sullivan was at work on the Cedar Rapids Bank and St. Pauls at the same time (1911) and began working on the large dry-goods store for the Van Allens in 1913.

Hugh Morrison found the Van Allen Store similar in concept to the Carson Pirie Scott Store in Chicago, although much smaller in scale. He is also somewhat critical of its most obvious Sullivanesque detail--the ornamental--"outbursts of terra cotta foliage in the attic (level). Corbels and finials, (if so they may be called), are a vivid green in color. Just above the finials, and forming a background for them, are inset tile panels in Dutch blue and white. These curious features must have been purely decorative in intention. They are nonstructural, occurring in the middle of the bays between the steel enclosing brick piers....they do not seem to be a part of the form, but merely applied on it, the exuberant naturalistic foliations ~~comport~~ poorly with a structure so geometrically rectilinear....occasional details such as this appear in other of his buildings, and we feel in them a tendency toward purely lyrical outbursts, like some passages in his writing."<sup>1</sup> These details today seem much less controversial--and more attractive to the critics of the 1960's-1970's who are not so timid about Romanticism.

The present owner is the grandson of the original client and is extremely proud of the building, maintaining it in its original condition with very few alterations. He retains the original blue prints, old record photographs and correspondence between Sullivan and this patron.

The Van Allen store, although small in scale, need only be compared to the conventional stores then being constructed across America, to realize that even in his last years, Louis Sullivan was one of our greatest architects.

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<sup>1</sup>Morrison, Hugh. Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture. W. W. Norton and Co., 1935, pp. 216-217.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5
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7	3	3	4	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	3	5	7	8	0
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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

B

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South 90 feet of lots 1, 2, 3 and west 11 1/2 feet of the north 50 feet of lot #3 and east 11 feet of lot #4, Block 13, Clinton, Iowa.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

July 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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VAN ALLEN & SON DEPARTMENT STORE, IOWA.

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

- Burchard, John, and Bush-Brown, Albert. The Architecture of America.  
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